



## Watch Me Grow - 3½ Years

### Get up-to-date on immunizations

If your child has received all the recommended vaccines, congratulations! He will be up-to-date for child care or preschool. It's not too late to catch up if your child has missed any immunizations. Bring his Lifetime Immunization Record card to every visit. By age 3½, most children will have had:

- 3 doses: Hepatitis B (HepB)
- 4 doses: Diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis (DTaP)
- 3 – 4 doses: *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib)
- 4 – 5 doses: Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV)
- 3 doses: Inactivated poliovirus (IPV)
- 1 dose: Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)
- 1 dose: Varicella (chickenpox)
- 2 doses: Hepatitis A (HepA)
- Influenza (flu), yearly

The next series of vaccines is recommended between 4 and 6 years. Talk with your doctor or nurse if you have questions about vaccines or the recommended schedule.

### Growth spurts

It is normal for children to grow faster some months than others. During growth spurts, your child may eat more than usual. Most children get taller and thinner, and gain weight more slowly at this age. If you wonder whether your child weighs too much or too little, or see changes in your child that worry you, talk to your doctor or nurse.

### Calcium and vitamin D are important

Calcium and vitamin D help build healthy bones and teeth. Four servings of milk, cheese, or yogurt each day give your child enough calcium. A serving is one slice of cheese, or ½ cup of low-fat milk or yogurt. Other good sources are well-cooked tofu made with calcium sulfate, and calcium-fortified soy milk or orange juice.

Vitamin D helps your child's body use calcium. The

recommended allowance is 600 IU of vitamin D a day for children over one year old. Few foods contain vitamin D naturally. This means that your child may not get enough vitamin D each day from food. Talk to your doctor or nurse about whether your child needs a vitamin D supplement.

### Help your child eat well

Your job is to provide your child a variety of healthy foods. Your child's job is to choose how much of those foods to eat.

- Set regular meal and snack times. Offer healthy snacks in the morning and afternoon. Apples, blueberries, cheese, crackers, tortillas, and pieces of vegetables are good choices. (Be careful of small, hard foods that can cause choking.)
- Provide at least one cup of vegetables and one cup of fruits each day.
- Offer water when your child is thirsty between meals and snacks. Limit fruit juice. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than 4 to 6 ounces (½ - ¾ cup) of 100% juice per day.
- Avoid sodas, sweet drinks, and snacking throughout the day. These things can spoil her appetite for healthy foods at mealtime and aren't good for her teeth.

### Avoid comforting your child with food

There are many reasons why your child may get unhappy or upset, other than being hungry. If he has eaten a meal or snack recently, think about other things that may be bothering him. He may be bored, tired, sick, or want your attention. Try these ideas instead of food:

- Snuggle up with each other and talk or read a book.
- Go for a walk together.
- Turn on some music and dance. Be silly together!

Offering food or drink to comfort your child when he's upset may lead to an unhealthy habit of over-eating.



Call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 (711 tty relay) or visit [ParentHelp123.org](http://ParentHelp123.org) to find:

- Immunization information
- Free or low-cost health insurance
- Breastfeeding support and nutrition programs
- Free developmental screenings and referrals to get your child school ready
- Information about your Child Profile mailings

# Keeping Your Child Healthy and Safe

## Children learn and develop at their own rate

Most children this age can:

- Hold a crayon between thumb and fingers.
- Kick and throw a ball.
- Understand simple directions.

By now, people outside your family should be able to understand what your child is saying at least half the time. If you have questions about your child's development or speech, talk with your doctor or nurse. You can also call your local school district or the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 to find out about a free screening.

## Talk with your child

Talking together is one of the best activities for you and your child. "Why?" is probably one of your child's favorite questions now. He thinks you know everything! You may get tired of answering the same questions over and over, but taking time to talk with him is very important. Listening to his ideas and stories can tell you what he is thinking and understanding. Knowing that you listen when he talks to you now may make it easier for him to come to you with problems as he gets older.

## Stay involved with preschool and child care

If your child is going to preschool, staying involved will help make sure she has a good experience.

- Meet regularly with your child's teachers and ask questions about how she is doing.
- Offer to volunteer.
- Join in on special events like field trips and holidays.

## Pretend play is part of learning

When your child plays "make-believe" he learns many things. He begins to learn how to care about other people when he pretends to be someone else. When he makes up stories, he learns how to be creative. He even learns how to handle his feelings and solve problems.



## Fire safety

Your family should have a plan to be sure that everyone gets out of the house in case of a fire. There should be two ways out of every room. Make sure your child knows what your smoke alarm sounds like. Visit the National Fire Protection Association at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) for more information.

## Protect your child in or near water

A child can drown quickly and silently in a tub, pool, river, lake, canal, or the ocean. Swimming and water safety are important skills for your child to learn.

**But even if she has had lessons, she is not old enough to be around water unless an adult is within arm's length**

**every minute!** Learning to swim is also fun and is a great exercise option for the whole family.

Put a life jacket on your child whenever she is near or on the water. Use a Coast Guard-approved Type II life jacket. Choose one that is made for your child's weight. It should have a strap between the legs. Adjust the straps to fit her snugly. State law requires children under age 13 to wear life jackets in boats shorter than 19 feet long.



## Lock up things that could poison your child

Poisons can look like food or drinks. Teach your child to ask an adult before he eats or drinks anything you haven't given him.

- Store medicines, vitamins, toothpaste, mouth wash, and household products in their original containers and where your child cannot see or reach them.
- Do not store cleaning products, paint, or gasoline in used soda, juice, or milk containers.

If you think your child has been poisoned, stay calm and call the **Washington Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222**. **Call 911 if your child has collapsed, stopped breathing, is having trouble breathing, or will not wake up.**

## Protect your child at home

Your child may seem very grown up now, but she does not understand danger or how she could hurt herself or others. Keep your home safe and watch her carefully.

- Purses, backpacks, and briefcases often have pills, cough drops, nail files, make-up, pocket knives, or lighters in them. Keep them out of reach.
- Keep screens in front of the fireplace and space heaters. Don't allow her to help cook at the stove. When you cook food outside, keep her away from the grill or fire.
- Never use a fuel burning heater, stove, or grill in your home or in a tent to provide heat or to cook with.
- Remember, 3½-year-olds still need to be supervised at bath time to prevent drowning and burns from hot water. Most bathtub injuries are due to slips. A non-skid mat in the tub or shower helps prevent falls.